



November 8, 2010

Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on the draft Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), released on September 24, 2010. Potomac Conservancy, an organization dedicated to protecting the health, beauty and enjoyment of the Potomac River and its tributaries, exhorts the Environmental Protection Agency to press firmly forward to establish a scientifically-valid, enforceable TMDL for the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Clean Water Act, three Bay Agreements, three court agreements, one memorandum of understanding, and one Presidential Executive Order all require development of a Bay-wide TMDL. This current process is not only the right thing to do, it is legally required.

Years of voluntary restoration measures by the States have failed to bring the Bay back to health. Bay fisheries are still in decline (or have collapsed), and immense 'dead zones' form during the summer months, in which even submerged aquatic grasses do not grow. Because past efforts to clean up the Bay have not succeeded, new approaches must be pursued.

Pollution from urban growth is the one source of nitrogen and phosphorous that is headed in the wrong direction. As the States create their Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP), the EPA should give particular scrutiny to their efforts to minimize pollution from future growth and development. EPA's 'backstop' requirements must be crafted to motivate States to better control nonpoint source pollution, especially urban stormwater runoff.

Agricultural runoff is a significant pollution source that has shown some improvement, but still has far to go. Sustained progress will require a balance of regulation and inducements, including cost-share assistance from both federal and state levels. EPA must marshal backing from its sister federal agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, to help in this regard. And states must be persuaded to match that support for their own agricultural sectors.

It is critical for our environment, our economy, and our quality of life that we restore the Chesapeake Bay to health. It is time for strong action and bold leadership from the EPA. We call upon you to stand by your commitment to do everything in EPA's power to reduce the pollution that is destroying the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries such as the Potomac River.

As you articulated on your first day as Administrator, restoring the Bay will require vigorous application of the EPA's authority. Achieving success in the Bay cleanup effort will unquestionably require regulatory action and firm enforcement by the EPA over the Bay jurisdictions as they finalize their WIPs and implement the TMDL.

Potomac Conservancy strongly supports the EPA establishing a decisive TMDL that finally secures a clean, restored Chesapeake Bay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hedrick Belin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Hedrick" and last name "Belin" clearly distinguishable.

Hedrick Belin
President